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ABSTRACT

This unit of study aims to help students in grades 9-12 experience the history, culture, religion, and literature of India by emphasizing active participation in the diverse art forms indigenous to India and those that are shared by India and the United States. Components of study in the unit are: The "Ramayana"; Indian Classical Dance; The "Mahabharata"; and Indian Shadow Puppetry. The unit enumerates seven educational goals for students and lists nine competencies that students should show after completion of activities. Each component in the unit lists materials needed and specific student activities. The unit is illustrated with color photographs. (BT)

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CURRICULUM PROJECTS DEVELOPED BY 1998 SEMINAR PARTICIPANTS

INDIA: A PERFORMANCE BASED UNIT

Curriculum Project
submitted by
Sharon L. Wheeler
Power Academic and Performing Arts Complex
Jackson, Mississippi
in fulfillment of
Fulbright-Hays Seminar
"Tradition and Modernity: India's Quantum Leap Into the 21st Century"
July 3 – August 8, 1998

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United States Educational Foundation in India

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Unit Overview

Students will experience the history, culture, religion and literature of India through a unit of study that emphasizes active participation in the diverse art forms indigenous to India and those that are shared by India and the United States. The components that will be studied are:

- The Ramayana
- Indian Classical Dance
- The Mahabharata
- Indian Shadow Puppetry

Teaching Level

- Grades 9 – 12

Goals

The student will:

- use language to communicate, express, and exchange ideas in a variety of forms for different audiences
- access, organize, and evaluate information
- use language to work individually and cooperatively to analyze and interpret information, to make decisions, to solve problems, and to reflect
- use language for continuous learning
- discover the heritage and beauty of language and literature from various cultures and perspectives
- read and respond to literature, art and dance
- develop the skills, motivation and organizational tools necessary to ensure success as a performing artist

Competencies

The student will:

- produce writing that reflects increasing proficiency through planning, writing, revising, and editing and which is specific to audience and purpose
- communicate ideas for a variety of school and other life situations through listening, speaking, and reading aloud
- read, evaluate, and use print, non-print, and technological sources to research issues and problems, to present information, and to complete projects
- work individually and as a member of an artistic team to analyze and interpret information, to make decisions, to solve problems, and to reflect, using increasingly complex and abstract thinking
- complete written presentations and performance based projects which exhibit interaction and consensus within a group
- discover the power and effect of reading, listening to and performing selections from various literary and cultural genres
- read, discuss, analyze and evaluate literature and art from various genres and cultures
- sustain progress toward fluent control of grammar, mechanics, and usage of standard English in the context of writing and speaking
- explore art as both a way of expanding knowledge and skills and as personal expression

The Ramayana

Materials

a version of *The Ramayana* with glossary of names and terms
(I recommend downloading a glossary and shortened version from
http://www.maxwell.syr.edu/maxpages/special/ramayana/glossary.html and
http://www.maxwell.syr.edu/maxpages/special/ramayana/RAMA/html)

selected costume pieces

art work representing scenes from *The Ramayana*

Activities

The student will:

- read and pronounce words and terms in the glossary
- orally read *The Ramayana* in a variety of group settings
- view art work depicting scenes from *The Ramayana*
- participate in a variety of dramatic activities throughout the reading as a check for comprehension
  - slide show
  - pantomime
  - narrative pantomime
  - re-enactment
  - puppet show
- participate in a series of complex dramatic activities that connect issues/themes in *The Ramayana* to today.

THE RAMAYANA

Activity 1: Advertising Campaign
Activity Card

You and the members of your group have just completed the reading and study of the Indian epic the RAMAYANA by the poet-sage Valmiki. With the members of your group, study the advertisements shown on the resource sheets you were given. Discuss the following questions:

What techniques do advertising people use to attract a consumer audience to a play, movie, TV show, or product? Talk about such things as images, slogans, music graphics, and lettering.

What themes or ideas from the RAMAYANA would best represent the work and attract a following?

What product derived from this work would appeal to you?

PREPARE AN ADVERTISING OR MARKETING CAMPAIGN FOR SOME PRODUCT INSPIRED BY THE RAMAYANA.

PRESENT YOUR CAMPAIGN TO THE OTHER GROUPS ON "SHARE DAY".

THE RAMAYANA

Activity 2: Modern Epic
Activity Card

You and the members of your group have just completed the reading and study of the Indian epic the RAMAYANA by the poet-sage Valmiki. With the introduction of the Indian concept of **dharma**, you learned that dharma is like one's role in a play or position on a team. For the play to go well or for the team to win, each person must "stay in character" or "play his/her position". If each thing in the universe does its dharma, the universe functions smoothly. When people or things violate their dharma, things fall apart.

Rama, Bharata and Sita are very important in India because they **always** did their dharma. What are their character traits that are worth emulating?

Several characters **violate** dharma. How did Ravanna violate the dharma of a faithful husband and a good king? How did the Surpanakah violate her dharma?

CREATE AND DRAMATIZE A MODERN DAY EPIC IN WHICH CONTEMPORARY CHARACTERS/SOCIETY DEAL WITH THE CONCEPT OF DHARMA.

(MAKE SURE YOU UNDERSTAND THE DEFINITION OF EPIC.)

PRESENT YOUR MODERN EPIC TO THE OTHER GROUPS ON "SHARE DAY".

THE RAMAYANA

Activity 3: Pilgrimage
Activity Card

You and the members of your group have just completed the reading and study of the Indian epic the RAMAYANA by the poet-sage Valmiki. In it we discover that the story takes place in many geographical locations in India considered sacred to which people still make **pilgrimage**.

Route of Rama and Sita

See the route taken by Rama and Sita at:
http://wwwmaxwell.syr.edu/maxpages/special/ramayana/immaproute.jpg

Pilgrimage

Pilgrims have followed the route of Rama and Sita in Exile for centuries. For a pilgrimage by American university students, see:
http://classes.colgate.edu/IndiaStudyGroup/rama.html

Define:

sacred
pilgrimage
holy

Discuss:

places in the US considered sacred to Americans
places outside of US which Americans consider sacred
society's responsibilities for a place considered sacred

PREPARE A PERFORMANCE PIECE IN WHICH PILGRIMAGE IS THE CENTRAL THEME.

YOU MUST INCLUDE ORIGINAL MUSIC, POETRY AND DANCE.

SHARE YOUR PERFORMANCE PIECE WITH OTHER GROUPS ON "SHARE DAY".

THE RAMAYANA

Activity 4: Dear Abby

Activity Card

You and the members of your group have just completed the reading and studying of the Indian epic the RAMAYANA by the poet-sage Valmiki. the characters in this story had many problems with which to cope. They sometimes called on the gods to help them with their problems. Today, many people with problems call on Dear Abby or TV talk show hosts or hostesses to help them.

With the members of your group, look at the "Dear Abby letters" and the answers to them. Discuss the following questions:

What were some of the problems faced by particular characters?

How might these problems be shared with Dear Abby or Oprah?

How do you thing Abby or Oprah might have responded?

CREATE FIVE OR MORE LETTERS TO DEAR ABBY WHICH MIGHT HAVE BEEN WRITTEN BY A CHARACTER FROM THE RAMAYANA.
THEN ANSWER THE LETTERS AS YOU THINK THAT ABBY WOULD HAVE ANSWERED.
YOU COULD HAVE LETTERS FROM TWO DIFFERENT CHARACTERS WHO ARE ON DIFFERENT SIDES OF THE SAME PROBLEM.

SHARE YOUR LETTERS WITH THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE CLASS.
OR
DESIGN A TALK SHOW WHOSE GUESTS ARE CHARACTERS FROM THE RAMAYANA.
DON'T FORGET THE STUDIO AUDIENCE! (JERRY SPRINGER FORMAT IS UNACCEPTABLE.
PRESENT TALK SHOW TO OTHER GROUPS ON "SHARE DAY".

STUDENT NAME: _____
ACTIVITY NAME: _____
VALUE: 10 PTS. EACH; TOTAL: 100 PTS. POSSIBLE

GROUP INDICATORS

self teacher

_____ _____ 1. Requirements of Activity Met

_____ _____ 2. Originality/Creativity

_____ _____ 3. Quality of the Script

_____ _____ 4. Technical Elements (costume, set, props, makeup, lighting, etc.)

_____ _____ 5. Blocking (use of space, visibility, focus, smooth transitions)

_____ _____ 6. Over-all Impression (well planned, rehearsed, confident)

INDIVIDUAL INDICATORS

self teacher

_____ _____ 7. Effective Time Management (on task)

_____ _____ 8. Acting (focus, character work, believable)

_____ _____ 9. Voice (articulation, pronunciation, projection)

_____ _____ 10. Level of Participation /Contribution

_____ _____ **GRAND TOTAL**

List your unique contributions to this group.(What did you make? What did you bring from home? What were your ideas? How did you move your group forward?)

_____
_____
_____
_____

Who (other than yourself!) did an outstanding job? Why?

_____
_____
_____
_____

RANGOLI

from Start to Finish

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proud of their
accomplishments!

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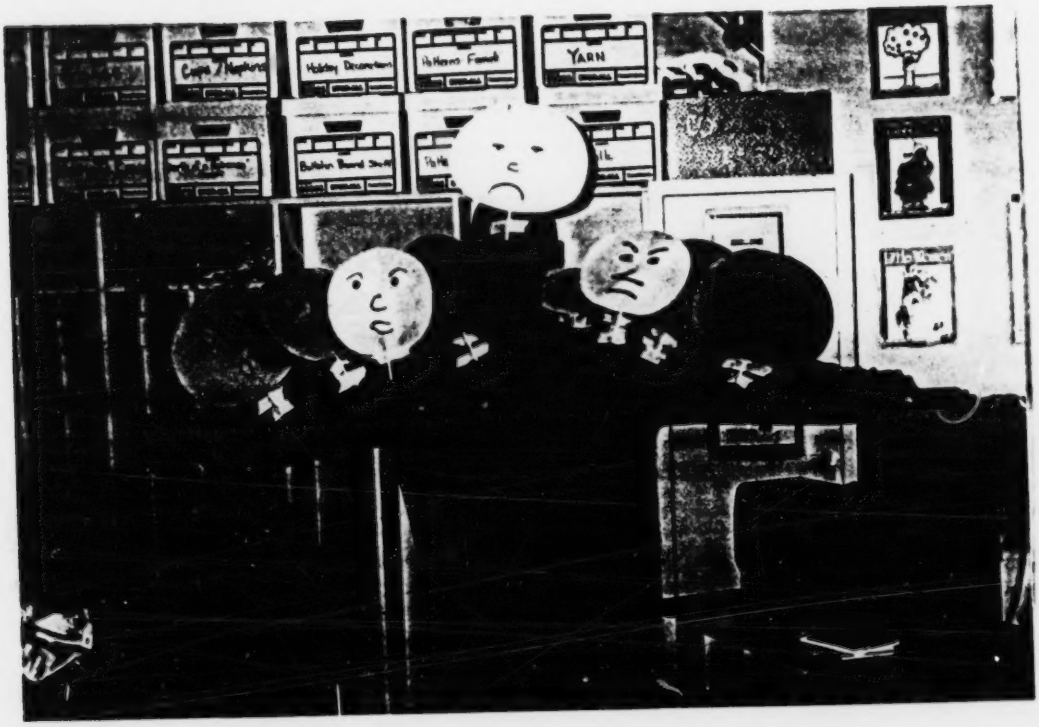
Neal plays the Demon
RAVANNA



"R" is for RAMA

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Students with Indian dancer
Vidya Murthy of Ahmedabad

U.S. students try their hand at Indian dance

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